

REMARKS

The specification has been amended for the sake of clarity, more particularly, the cross-referencing data has been updated, and the written description conformed to that of the immediately preceding application, more particularly, that corresponding to U.S. Pat. No. 6,719,709. With regard to the claims, previously non-elected claims, namely those of Group II in the immediately preceding application (i.e., claims 30-33 as filed), have been retained, with those of previously elected Group I (i.e., claims 1-29) canceled, and new claims 34-42 added. Finally, contemporaneously with the subject Preliminary Amendment, Applicants provide the following in response to the "Notice to File Missing Parts of Nonprovisional Application" mailed July 29, 2004: (1) formal/replacement drawings, under separate cover, for consideration by the Official Draftsperson; (2) a petition captioned EVIDENCE OF DEPOSIT OF ITEMS WITH APPLICATION INDICATED AS OMITTED IN THE "NOTICE TO FILE MISSING PARTS OF NONPROVISIONAL APPLICATION," and fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.17(h); and, (3) the requisite fees, namely, the statutory filing fee and surcharge (small entity), and excess claim fees, as the case may be.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons above, it is respectfully submitted that the subject case is in condition for examination, and allowance. Early reconsideration and favorable action are solicited.

Please charge any deficiencies or credit any over payment to Deposit Account 14-0620.

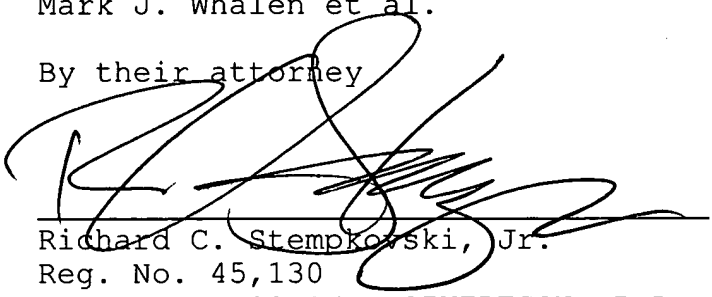
Respectfully submitted,

Mark J. Whalen et al.

By their attorney

Date

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Richard C. Stempkowski, Jr.
Reg. No. 45,130
NAWROCKI, ROONEY & SIVERTSON, P.A.
Suite 401, Broadway Place East
3433 Broadway St. N.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55413
(612) 331-1464